

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 00680 121726Z

61

ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PO, AG

SUBJ: VISIT OF PORTUGUESE MINISTER OF STATE

REF: LISBON 1276

1. PORTUGUESE MINISTER OF STATE ERNESTO MELO ANTUNES WAS IN ALGIERS ON TWO DAY VISIT MARCH 10-11. ACCORDING MOHAMED ABERKANE, DIRECTOR NORTH AMERICAN AND WESTERN EUROPE AFFAIRS AT FOREIGN MINISTRY, DISCUSSIONS WITH ANTUNES CENTERED ON "COOPERATION". WHEN ASKED TO DEFINE TERM COOPERATION ABERKANE SAID IT MEANT NUMBER OF THINGS, INCLUDING RATE OF PORTUGAL'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PORTUGAL'S PLACE IN MEDITERRANEAN AND NORTH AFRICAN CONTEXT.

2. BEFORE DEPARTURE ANTUNES GAVE INTERVIEW TO ALGERIAN PRESS SERVICE IN WHICH HE REFUSED COMMENT ON YESTERDAY'S COUP ATTEMPT AND SPOKE OF POSITIVE RESULTS OF HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE AND OF INTERESTS WHICH LINKED THE TWO COUNTRIES AND TWO PEOPLE. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT CURRENT RELATIONS BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND NATO AND THE STATUS OF THE AZORES BASES, HE REPLIED AS FOLLOWS: /OUR RELATIONS WITH
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PAGE 02 ALGIER 00680 121726Z

NATO ARE DEVELOPING WITH THE RESPECT FOR THE TREATIES

ESTABLISHED BEFORE APRIL 25, 1974. THE PROGRAM OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT INDICATES CLEARLY THAT PREVIOUS TREATIES WITH OTHER NATIONS OF THE WORLD WILL BE RESPECTED. NEVERTHELESS, I SHOULD SAY THAT THE PROFOUND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION WHICH PORTUGAL IS UNDERGOING HAS A CLEAR DIRECTION--A DIRECTION OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, WHICH INCLUDES A POLICY ON NON-ALIGNMENT WITH REGARD TO THE GREAT POWERS. WE ARE A SMALL COUNTRY WHICH CANNOT BE INTERESTED BY A POLICY OF BLOCS. FURTHERMORE, POLITICAL REALISM OBLIGES US TO HAVE NORMAL RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, GIVEN OUR GEOGRAPHIC POSITION AND OUR ECONOMY. WITH REGARD TO THE AZORES BASE WE THINK THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE PLACED AT THE SERVICE OF ANY INTEREST NOT INCLUDED IN THE ATLANTIC PACT. WE MUST CONTROL OUR MATERIAL RESOURCES AND OUR TERRITORY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT. THE AZORES BASE CANNOT BE USED FOR ACTIONS CONTRARY TO THE NEW SPIRIT OF PORTUGAL'S FOREIGN POLICY."PARKER

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